California
Child and Family Services Review
County System Improvement Plan
County of Imperial

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Vision…..
Every child in California lives in a safe, stable, permanent home, nurtured by healthy families and strong communities.

California's Child and Family Services Review
System Improvement Plan

County:	Imperial
Responsible County Child Welfare Agency:	Imperial County Department of Social Services Children and Family Services
Period of Plan:	October 1, 2004 through September 30, 2005
Period of Outcomes Data:	Quarter ending December 31, 2003
Date Submitted:	September 29, 2004
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Acknowledgements

Imperial County's Children and Family Services would like to thank all of the stakeholders of the County System Improvement Plan (SIP) for their work, commitment, and contributions to both the SIP and the County Self Assessment (CSA). Their expertise and dedication have contributed to this countywide endeavor. In addition, there are many others who contributed to this process who we would like to recognize. The contents of this report reflect the many hours of dialogue and collection of information used to assess the child welfare system in Imperial County.

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Imperial County Behavioral Health	Quechan Indian Tribe
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Imperial Valley Regional Occupational Program	Imperial County Office of Education
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County of Imperial Child Welfare Staff

Emergency Response, Investigations Hilda Baeza and staff	Licensing Unit Angelica Duenas and staff
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IMPERIAL COUNTY
COUNTY SELF-ASSESSMENT AND SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT PLAN

During the summer of 2003 the County began to undertake a comprehensive self-assessment of how it serves children and families in Imperial County. This was due to the State implementing a new Outcomes and Accountability Review System. All the counties in California were asked to develop a plan and to submit to the state. Imperial County has worked since then to meet the (CWS) Redesign requirements.

A conference was held in November of 2003 for the community to educate and invite them to participate in this process. This was a success as there were over 75 participants who attended. There was an overwhelming response to our request of participants for the County Self-Assessment Team. The team made up of core representatives as well as other community partners worked to assess how Imperial County is doing on meeting the eight identified outcomes.

Each of the outcomes was addressed in the report to assess how the delivery of Child Welfare Services impacts the outcomes of the indicators. Information was gathered during the conference, through interviews of staff, and through surveys of CWS staff, Community Partners, Service Providers, Foster Parents, Foster Youth, Parent Leadership, and the public.

The review of specific measures is addressed in the State-required report called the System Improvement Plan (SIP) that is due to the State by September 30, 2004. The SIP is the County's roadmap for reforming the child welfare services system and is the next step in the evolving Redesign process that is envisioned to be a three-year recurring process leading to continuing improvement of the outcome indicators outlined in the report.

The County's Self-Assessment addresses a number of factors, including demographic data for the County, a discussion about the current child welfare system, the County's service array, and collaborative efforts in place to help address the well-being of children and families.

Finally, in going through the Self-Assessment process we found that though we already have some practices in place, we recognize that we can do a better job providing for safety, permanency, and well-being to children and their families. With this insight informed by the team, a report was completed that includes the findings of all of the data compiled during this assessment process.

The County Self-Assessment (CSA) was approved by the CSA Team and submitted to the state as required by June 30, 2004. The team continued to meet and confer on the process of the System Improvement Plan until it was completed.

1. LOCAL PLANNING BODIES

The local planning bodies that have provided input into the County Self-Assessment (CSA) and the System Improvement Plan (SIP) consists of local stakeholders and agencies that service the families and children who are in the system, along with consumers of CWS services and advocates. The following is a brief description of those involved in this process and services they provide to children and families in the community:

CORE REPRESENTATIVES

Child Welfare Services: The Program Manager, Unit Supervisors, Staff Services Analyst, and Social Workers have participated and provided feedback throughout this process by attending meetings, providing feedback and completing a survey.

Probation: The Probation Department contribution has included Supervisors and Officers to participate in both the CSA and the SIP by attending meetings and providing feedback. Additionally, they assisted by distributing and collecting a survey of current foster youth being supervised by the Probation Department. The Probation Department has been working in collaboration with the above-mentioned agencies in the delivery of services to minors and their families.   Probation currently has Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) in place with the Department of Social Services, Behavioral Health Services and the Imperial County Office of Education.   Through these MOUs they have developed specialized units such as Domestic Violence Prevention, Proposition 36, EPSDT, Calipatria School Community Policing Program, Steps of Success for Youth

Representative for Youth: A representative for youth has been actively involved in the CSA and SIP process by attending meetings, providing feedback, and distributing, collecting, and submitting a survey for current and former foster youth.

County Adoptions: The Unit Supervisor has provided information and feedback to both the CSA and the SIP process. Adoption services social workers are assigned to provide pre-and-post-adoptive services to expedite the adoption process and support the adoptive families. Families that are preparing to adopt a child are provided services as well as information and referrals to service providers in their communities. There are post adoption services available to assist in the success of the adoption of a child such as individual and group counseling.

GROUPS THAT MUST BE CONSULTED OR REPRESENTED

The following groups have been invited to attend and participate in the County Self-Assessment and the System Improvement Plan process:

Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA): The Executive Director of CASA has attended meetings, provided feedback and participated in CSA and SIP process. Court

Appointed Special Advocates provide the following services for children: Advocating for services/educational needs, mentoring, resource referrals, court reports, tracking/reporting of placement changes/effects, visitation for children with parents/siblings.

County Health Department: The Director of the Maternal Child and Adolescent Health attended meetings, provided feedback, and participated in the CSA and SIP process. Public Health provides the following services: California Children's Services Program (0 to 21 yrs), Child Health and Disability Program (0 to 21 yrs), Comprehensive Perinatal Services Program (child bearing age), Perinatal Outreach Education Program (19 and above), Medically Vulnerable Infant Program and Outreach & Intervention Program (newborns), Sudden Infant Death Program (serves primarily adults), Adolescent Family Life (childbearing up to 20 yrs)

County Behavioral Health Department: A Clinical Services Manager and two Administrative Analyst attended meetings, provided feedback, and participated in the CSA and SIP process. Behavioral Health provides the following services: case management services, specialized services, counselors, Drug and Alcohol Programs, Childrens' Outpatient Services (up to 18 yrs), Socialization Program (7 to 12 yrs), Adolescent Habilitative Learning Program (13 to 18 yrs), Early Mental Health Initiative k to 3rd grade), and Peri-natal Programs (Parenting classes, Drug and Alcohol, Childcare, and Transportation).

There is a partnership being developed between Behavioral Health and Child Welfare Services. Behavioral Health will provide intensive services to parents whose children are court dependents. These services are in collaboration with CWS to assist the parents in successful reunification with their children.

Local representatives of children and parents: A parent who has been through the CWS system attended and participated in the process of the CSA and SIP. A parent support group was formed during the CSA process and meets monthly. This group completed a survey and submitted it to the CSA team for feedback to be considered in the CSA and SIP process for improvement.

Local Juvenile Court Bench Officer: The courts have been invited and kept informed of the CSA and SIP process. Observations noted during the CSA will be addressed with the new presiding judge. At that time, these issues and areas of improvements will be assessed and the direction will be determined as well as the roles, relationships, expectations and responsibilities of the juvenile courts and CWS.

Local Education Agency: Representatives from Imperial County Office of Education - Special Education and Alternative Education programs provided feedback to the CSA process. They also have been informed of the process and progress of the SIP.

Local Tribe(s) for applicable Counties: The Director of Quechan Social Services attended and participated in the CSA and SIP process. Quechan Social Services

provides the following family services: Tribal Day Care, Victim Services, Indian Health Services - Child Protection Team (CPT), and Family Reunification are among the services offered to Native American Residence. CWS participates in the monthly CPT meetings at the local tribal council in Winterhaven, California. This has led to positive relationships with the local Quechan tribe. This forum covers rules and regulations and how to successfully apply these requirements in Imperial County. Also, the tribal representative attends initial and on-going court hearings for the ICWA families. Imperial County has designated three social workers as tribal liaisons that attend the ICWA training and conferences. These are the only social workers assigned the ICWA cases.

Regional Training Academy: A representative from the Public Child Welfare Training Academy (PCWTA) attended and participated in the CSA process. That representative has since left the academy and another has been recommended. That representative has been invited to attend and participate in the SIP process. The PCWTA provides training to line staff, supervisors, and managers. Additionally, they provide training on advanced topics for line staff, supervisors, and managers. PCWTA provided training on the AB636 Initiatives to our staff and partners.

County Welfare Department: CalWORKs has attended and participated in the CSA and SIP process. The Program Manager and other staff have attended, participated, provided feedback for the CSA and SIP process. CalWORKs provides the following services: Substance and Alcohol Abuse programs, Mental Health Services, Domestic Violence, SARB Mediation, vocational, childcare, transportation, educational and employment services.

CWS Referrals are screened to see what programs the family already utilizes and/or is eligible for. If the family is receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) they are eligible for services through CalWORKs funding. Allocations for staffing in these areas have made it possible to refer families who may not otherwise receive the services due to waiting lists. Social workers will coordinate with staff from CalWORKs and contracted providers (i.e. Behavioral Health, Employment Development Department, vocational/educational training) to ensure appropriate services are provided. CalWORKs also provides transportation and child care services for families in their programs.

Domestic Violence Prevention Provider: The Director of Center for Family Solutions attended and participated in the CSA and SIP process. This agency provides the following services: Domestic Violence Classes, Anger Management, and a Women and children's shelter. Anger management classes are offered by the Center for family Solutions (CFS). CFS also provides classes to address domestic violence in their homes.

Local Child Abuse Prevention Council: The Director attended and participated in the CSA and was kept informed of the progress in the SIP – Child Abuse Prevention Council provides the following services: parenting classes, teen talk session, community forums and presentations.

<u>OTHER SERVICE PROVIDERS THAT WERE CONSULTED OR REPRESENTED:</u>

<u>Imperial County Office of Education (ICOE)</u>: Representatives from this agency have attended and participated in the CSA and SIP process. ICOE provides the following services: Child Development Services (childcare and child care resource and referral), Migrant Education (migrant program supports migrant students and schools), Student Well-Being & Family Resources (variety of programs concerned with the comprehensive health of students and their families). Academic & Employment Services (employment preparation and job search), Special Education (services for the severely handicapped) Special Services (Nurses and Psychologists), Alternative Education (Community Schools, Esther Huff, and Betty Jo McNeece), and Family Resource Centers and numerous programs to communities in which they are located.

<u>Family Resource Centers (FRC):</u> The FRC's are located in communities and provide a wide range of services to families designed to help families alleviate crises that might lead to out of home placement of children. CWS social workers work with a multi-disciplinary team at the center to assist in maintaining safety of children in their homes. Those co-located in the centers are Behavioral Health, Social Services, Probation, Imperial County Office of Education, and local schools. Other partners who assist in these efforts are CalWORKs, Law Enforcement, Center for Family Solutions (Domestic Violence), Sure Helpline (referral resource), Public Health, and Clinica's (medical and health services).

The resource centers provide a one-stop location for families to access a variety of human services for children and families. The centers can also provide information and referrals to other service providers such as drug and alcohol programs, anger management and domestic violence services, food assistance, housing and shelters, job training, support groups, child care, transportation, adoptions and elderly services.

<u>Law Enforcement</u>: A Child Protection Agency Partner. A deputy from the Imperial County Sheriff's Department participated in the CSA process and has provided feedback for the CSA and SIP process. In addition, several members of the Child Abuse Response Team (CART) have attended and participated in the CSA and SIP process. CART is a multi-disciplinary team lead by the District Attorney's Office who prosecutes child abuse cases.

The team is made up of law enforcement from each city (seven) and one for the county (Sheriffs-eight), Department of Social Services, Probation Department, Medical professionals from Pioneers Memorial Hospital (Sexual Assault Response Team), Public Health Department, Behavioral Health, County Counsel, Child and Parent Council, Sure Helpline, Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigations, California Department of Parole, Center for Family Solutions (Domestic Violence), Quechan Indian Tribe, Imperial County Office of Education, and California's Peace Officers Crime Victims Coalition.

This is a collaborative effort to respond, investigate, and provide services to children and families who are victims of violence. Social Services has seven social workers that are certified to conduct Forensic Interviews for Law Enforcement. The county has allowed these social workers to assist in the interviews during regular work hours and attend monthly meetings. Social Services staff currently leads and organizes the Peer Review component of CART. This entails coordinating with law enforcement and the forensic interviewer along with the team to review and provide constructive feedback. The forensic interview room is located in the Department of Social Services who coordinates with law enforcement to schedule and make the room available when needed.

Neighborhood House: Several staff members attended and participated in the conference in November of 2003. They provided feedback to CWS as to how our agencies can improve outcomes for children and families. This agency provides shelter care, food assistance, home visitation for families, childcare, or educational services.

Interagency Steering Committee (ISC): The ISC Coordinator has attended and participated in the CSA and SIP process. (ISC) has a commitment to maximize efficiencies, minimize duplication, and to develop new resources. The ISC brings together representatives of county agencies that serve children, youth, and families; law enforcement, probation, and court officials of the justice system; the Department of Social Services; the County Office of Education; local school districts; city governments; employment services; community organizations; and colleges and universities. Members have the responsibility and authority to make decisions about collaborative programs, policies, and resource allocations.

2. DATA COLLECTION

Data collection began early in this process. It was gathered through work groups, surveys, interviews, and CWS/CMS data reports. This information assisted in the analysis of qualitative practices such as customer service, family assessment, service delivery, and case planning. This information was integrated into the CSA and SIP to support qualitative change in the Child Welfare System. The following is a brief description of data collection techniques, target audience, number of responses, and how it was incorporated in the CSA and SIP.

Child Welfare Staff completed a survey for this process. They were given information on the outcomes in safety, permanency, and well being and asked to comment on each of the systemic factors: Case Review, Foster/Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment and Retention, Service Array, Staff and Provider Training, Agency Collaborations, County-wide Prevention Activities and Strategies. Supervisors were asked to meet with their units and complete the survey. Data was also collected from UC Davis Reports and CWS/CMS (ie, Quarterly Reports, Program Manager (PM) reports). This information was referenced throughout the CSA and SIP process and has been integrated into the SIP in the areas selected for improvement (Outcomes 2B, 2C, 4B, 8A and Systemic Factors A, B, C).

Probation staff was surveyed and provided information that has been included in both the CSA and the SIP. This information has been used to complete the SIP component for foster children supervised by the county probation department (see Probation – Outcome 8A and Systemic Factor A).

Information was gathered during the conference as our attendees worked in groups to provide and suggest ideas for improving services to children and families in the county. There were over 75 participants at this conference made up of community partners throughout the county. The ideas and suggestions were compiled into a feedback sheet that was used throughout the CSA and SIP process to improve delivery and quality of services to child and families in Imperial County. This information has been incorporated throughout the CSA and SIP.

Current and former foster youth were surveyed during the CSA process. Both CWS and Probation youth were included in this process. This was a collaborative effort between staff from CWS, Probation, and IVROP. There were 52 surveys completed by youth (the majority are currently in the system). This information was used in the CSA process and incorporated in the SIP (see Outcome 8A).

Foster parents were provided a survey to complete during Foster Parent Appreciation Day. There were 16 surveys completed and submitted to the CSA team. This information has been referred to throughout the CSA and SIP process (see Outcome 4B and System Factor C).

Parents from the newly formed Parent Leadership group completed surveys regarding their experience with the Child Welfare System. There were 10 surveys completed and submitted to the CSA team for the CSA and SIP process. This information has been referred to throughout the CSA and incorporated into the SIP (see Systemic Factor B).

Community Members were surveyed at the Imperial County Superior Court House during "Law Day 2004." The survey asked the attendee to identify themselves as general public, public agency, youth, courts, attorney, or other. There were 32 responses in total in the following areas: 12 General Public, 6 Public Agency, 4 Youth, 3 Courts, 3 Attorney, 2 Other and 2 not identified. These comments and suggestions were incorporated into the CSA and SIP (see Outcomes 4B, 8A and Systemic Factors B, C).

3. SUMMARY ASSESSMENT (Section V) OF THE COUNTY SELF-ASSESSMENT

Background

Redesign Initiative

Under the Governor's direction, in 2000, California Department of Social Services (CDSS) Director appointed a Child Welfare Services Stakeholders Group. This group began work in August 2000 to examine and develop a broad reform of California's Child Welfare System. This reform is referred to as "Redesign" and is an on-going process. It is inclusive of community and neighborhood, responds to individual needs and unique circumstances and brings together people in each community to share knowledge, funding and responsibility.

Outcomes and Accountability Initiative

Assembly Bill 636, signed in 2001, required a new outcomes-based review system, the California Children and Family Services Review (C-CFSR). This system took its lead from the federal Child and Family Services Review System, adopting Federal Outcomes and adding new ones. A new outcomes-based accountability system is now in place.

Main Reform Components

County Self-Assessment (CSA)

Every three years, each county is required to assess how it performed on each of the outcomes. The purpose of the self-assessment is to involve the entire community in assessing the County child welfare system's strengths and areas needing improvement; and to focus County efforts on those areas of need. The CSA is due to California Department of Social Services (CDSS) June 30, 2004.

County System Improvement Plan (SIP)

The SIP is an operational agreement between each county and the state that outlines how the county plans to improve its system of child welfare services. Each county is required to update the state annually on its progress to accomplishing the objectives of the SIP and to request changes. The SIP requires Board of Supervisors' approval and is due to CDSS on September 30, 2004.

Peer Quality Case Review (PQCR)

Building on the County Self-Assessment, outside experts (including peers from other counties) evaluate the County's child welfare practices and service delivery system through intensive case review to further identify strengths and areas needing improvement. Imperial County has participated in training and assisted Riverside and San Bernardino Counties with their PQCR. The PQCR for Imperial County will take place as soon as the state gives the approval to move forward with this process.

County Level Performance Indicators:
Indicators that go beyond the Federal CFSR on safety, permanence, and well-being were developed to measure county performance of Child Welfare Services. These indicators will be available to counties quarterly to monitor and improve outcomes.

California's System Reform Components shifted traditional abuse and neglect boundaries and focused more on children, their families and their uniqueness. It also brought to the forefront that child safety and well-being is a priority that must be shared with families, communities and partner agencies, not just Child Welfare Services.

Imperial County's Self-Assessment Process

During the summer of last year the County began to undertake a comprehensive self-assessment of how it serves children and families in Imperial County. This was due to the State implementing a new Outcomes and Accountability Review System. All the counties in California were asked to develop a plan and to submit to the state. Imperial County has worked since then to meet the CWS Redesign requirements.

A conference was held in November of 2003 for the community to educate and invite them to participate in this process. This was a success as there were over 75 participants who attended. There was an overwhelming response to our request of participants for the County Self-Assessment Team. The team made up of core representatives as well as other community partners worked to assess how Imperial County is doing on meeting the eight identified outcomes.

Each of the outcomes has been addressed in this report to assess how the delivery of Child Welfare Services impacts the outcomes on the above indicators. Information was gathered during the conference and through surveys to CWS staff, Community Partners, Service Providers, Foster Parents, Foster Youth, Parent Leadership, and the public.

The review of specific measures will be more fully addressed in the subsequent State-required report called the System Improvement Plan (SIP) that will be due to the State by September 30, 2004. The SIP will become the County's roadmap for reforming the child welfare services system and is the next step in the evolving Redesign process that is envisioned to be a three-year recurring process leading to continuing improvement of the outcome indicators outlined in the report.

The County's Self-Assessment addresses a number of factors, including demographic data for the County, a discussion about the current child welfare system, the County's service array, and collaborative efforts in place to help address the well-being of children and families. In addition, improving outcomes is addressed in this report and the development of a community response to children and families will be addressed in the System-Improvement Plan.

Finally, in going through the Self-Assessment process we found that though we already have some practices in place, we recognize that we can do a better job providing safety and well-being to children and their families. With this insight and information from the team, a report was completed to include the findings of all of the data compiled during this assessment process. The following is a summary of those findings.

A. Discussion of System Strengths and Areas Needing Improvements

Over the months of gathering information for the County's Self-Assessment, there have been noted strengths and improvements that have come to the surface. The challenge will be to develop a collaborative system that is located in neighborhoods and communities and builds family supports outside of the formal CWS/Probation systems.

The following is a summary of the strengths and areas needing improvement:

Referral Rates:

Referral rates were high in Imperial County (67 per 1,000) compared to the state (57.4 per 1,000). Following that observation it has been speculated as to the relationship between referrals and detentions. A particular strength is the continuing and developing relationships with the community and service providers. A strategy to further explore with the Community Partners is Differential Response. This includes encouraging service providers to address cooperatively the service needs of families shared by multiple providers. By formalizing the network of existing providers, family needs might be better met through an existing pool of providers working cooperatively to prevent families from becoming part of the dependency system. This will help reduce the referral rates.

Safety Outcomes:

The current system allows the discharge of court dependency after set time limits. Performance for this indicator may be impacted by tight time frames for the provision of services; delays in service appointments; lack of transportation to services; or other factors. There is no formal system established to follow the child/family after the case has been dismissed. Better collaboration of service providers may provide some relief to families and children once formal supervision by CWS or Probation ends.

The County places a high priority on having staff make timely contacts with children under its supervision. The County recognizes that timely contacts are important and uses a case review system that requires supervisors to use reports comprised of CWS/CMS data, to ensure visits are being completed in a timely manner. Supervisors have the responsibility of reviewing the reports prior to disseminating to their staff. The reports include reminders of contacts, referrals, case plans, and court reports. In this manner they assure that timely actions are taken. Also, social workers that are scheduled to make contacts with children in out-of-County placements coordinate with

other staff who have children in the area and arrange for child contacts on behalf of their unit when needed.

It has been discovered that the social workers are completing visits with the children on their caseloads although, the visit is not documented in CWS/CMS in a timely manner. Through a survey conducted with staff it was confirmed that although CWS/CMS is helpful in case management it is also cumbersome and time consuming. Social workers are torn between doing their mandated contacts and services "Social Work" versus documentation.

Additionally, staffing issues and workloads being high contribute to the backlog of data entry. It has been suggested that the hiring of office assistant staff to alleviate this task from social workers. Additional clerical staff has not been hired due to a hiring freeze. Even though, there has been a request to hire additional staff to help meet the state and federal mandates. It is believed that hiring clerical staff to assist with inputting contacts will help to reflect true numbers on this measure. There will be a need to track this data and process to confirm the extent of success, although we anticipate the rates will drastically improve in the areas of Safety.

Recurrence of Maltreatment:

The current system may unintentionally lead to the premature reunification of children with their families. A number of socioeconomic factors add stresses to the family that may translate into risk factors that are not consistently addressed in the current system. A number of previously identified reform efforts may help improve performance for this indicator.

Permanency

Imperial County has higher rates of children who have been reunified within a 12-month period than the state. A number of issues have been considered that would impact performance on this measure. The collaborative efforts of social workers, community partners, and service providers impact this performance measure positively. Never the less, there is always room for improvement and the need to further investigate the rate of recurrence and re-entry to foster care. This includes closer working relationships among the service providers, a look at how informal networks can be utilized to provide assistance and support to families in crisis, and improved communication among the service Community Partners.

Placement Stability:

County demographic data suggest that larger families, coupled with a requirement to keep sibling groups together, and the lack of foster homes, will result in multiple placements. It is obvious that this is an issue that will need further analysis as to what can be done to improve this outcome given the complexity of the problems with placements in the county. The County continues to address performance for this

indicator by; Seeking funding streams to develop a comprehensive assessment center (for new detention cases); Increasing efforts to recruit, train, and retain foster and adoptive families; and assessing whether systemic reform efforts, like Differential Response prevent children from entering the dependency system.

Family Relations:

Systemic reform efforts that fit along a continuum of services may lead to improvement for this outcome factor. A well-coordinated service system would support families early and upon exit from either CWS or Probation. It is understood that the more contact and visitation the family has, the better the outcomes. This area will need to be addressed as there are many issues surrounding the lack of resources to provide the necessary visits for families.

Children Transitioning to Adulthood:

The Independent Living (Skills) Program (ILP) performance data suggest that improvement is needed for this measure and current socioeconomic factors may impede progress. To sustain current performance and to improve performance, Imperial County's ILP Team will want to look at expansion of the service mix and opportunities to prepare youth for adulthood. One suggestion is that youth that attain 14 years of age enroll in the ILP Program for services. Certainly, this is an important area for continued review that will be more fully addressed in the County's subsequent System Improvement Plan.

Probation:

Since the beginning of this process, the Probation Department has taken a proactive approach to providing information for this assessment. As a core partner on the County's Self-Assessment Team, Probation has demonstrated the desire to improve outcomes for children and families. They took the opportunity to view its service delivery to foster children under its jurisdiction and their relationship to the Child Welfare System. Probation looked specifically to the mandates posed by AB 636 and provided indicators and data related to them to improve outcomes that will be addressed in the System Improvement Plan.

Systemic Factors:

Previously discussed were efforts by Imperial County to consider a number of systemic reforms with the intent of improving service delivery to children and families. These were:

a. Family Conferencing that is built upon a family-centered approach to services. This will help impact referral and recidivism rates, and it will be more fully explored in the County's System Improvement Plan that is to be developed over the next few months.

b. Differential Response allows a continuum of response to child abuse and neglect referrals that provides a systemic way to refer families for appropriate resources; is more individualized and less adversarial and engages families with community resources to meet their needs. It does not depend on substantiation of neglect or abuse to access needed services.

c. Wrap-Around Services: This service delivery option was considered for its usefulness with certain families as a preventive measure. It is designed to keep kids at home in their communities.

e. Home Visiting Program. This program gained attention a few years ago. Imperial County will look further into the implementation of this program.

The majority of the Community Partners agree that we need to find a better way of providing services to children and families. The message was clear to Community Partners that child abuse is "everyone's problem." A number of challenges face Imperial County as it moves toward a community response system as addressed in the document and in the impact on systemic factors.

B. Areas for further exploration through the Peer Quality Case Review (PQCR)

The State has adopted a new system of case reviews outlined in the Outcomes and Accountability System (an outcomes-based system), which was implemented effective January 2004. That shift has become the basis for this report. Under the redesigned system of outcomes and accountability, Peer Quality Case Reviews or PQCR, is a review system versus a traditional audit. Imperial County has been trained and participated in two PQCR's; San Bernardino and Riverside Counties.   Both counties have agreed to assist Imperial County in their review later this year if approved by the state.

There are many questions that remain unanswered about the implementation of this review system, corrective action plans to improve performance, and responsibility for the completion of review plan and continued monitoring. At the community level, much more work must be done to prepare partners to assume responsibility for the delivery of child welfare services. There are also questions about case management, response, liability and most of all, the lack of funding such a system and the impact on the county.

Even though the state is going through budget and reorganization issues, it is felt that a partnership should be established between the state and county to address concerns. For instance, state mandates should be fully funded in order to achieve expectations of redesign and AB636. Ownership of non-compliance should be shared and counties should not be solely penalized. Another concern is the methodology used for FTE's. An overhaul is long overdue as indicated by the 2030 Workload Study. Finally, to assist in the implementation of this new system the county should have access to a

designated consultant for each child welfare program and be kept informed of any changes.

There have been many discussions over the issues and perceived problems with outcome rates for Imperial County. The areas chosen to use under the PQCR review process will be Recurrence of Abuse and Family Engagement.   The county will continue to seek ways to strengthen our systems to improve outcomes for the children and families of Imperial County.

Outcome Factor: 2B Child Abuse/Neglect Referrals with a Timely Response	
Systemic Factor: D Quality Assurance	

County's Current Performance:

Our current performance for Immediate Response Compliance in Q4 (Oct-Dec 2003) is 100% compared to the state 93.9%. Q3 (Jul-Sept 2003) is 83.3% compared to the state 93.6%. Q2 (Apr-Jun 2003) is 87.1% compared to the state 94.5%.   Current performance for 10-Day Response Compliance in Q4 is 70.1% compared to the state 88.0%. Q3 is 78.0% compared to the state 90.6%. Q2 71.7% compared to the state 88.6%. There is a 90% threshold for these outcome indicators that the county must work towards achieving in the next three years.

During the CSA process, it was learned that staff were making the visits but not documenting in CWS/CMS in a timely manner. Through a survey conducted with staff it was expressed that although CWS/CMS is helpful in case management it was also cumbersome and time consuming. Staff felt torn between doing their mandated contacts and services versus documentation. High caseloads and complexity were also considered to be a factor in this outcome measure.

Improvement Goal 1.0

Improve Timeliness of data input among staff

Strategy 1. 1 Identify staff responsible for inputting information into CWS/CMS	**Strategy Rationale**[1] Having designated staff to ensure that data is entered on a timely basis will improve this outcome measure and demonstrate our commitment to addressing this issue.

Milestone		Timeframe	Assigned to	
	1.1.1 Identify units/staff with delinquent input issues via CWS/CMS	1 mo (10/31/04)		Program Manager and Supervisors
	1.1.2 Staff redeployed from current duties to bring targeted units/staff up to date	2 mos (11/30/04)		Program Manager
	1.1.3 Train redeployed staff to task specific duties to bring targeted units/staff current in CWS/CMS data entry	3 mos (12/31/04)		Analyst, Staff Development and System Support Technician

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[1] **Describe how the strategies will build on progress and improve this outcome or systemic factor**

Strategy 1. 2 Set Timely Data Input Schedule			**Strategy Rationale** [1] Supervisory staff will confer, set up, and agree upon a reasonable set schedule that will improve outcomes	
Milestone	**1.2.1**. Line Staff meet with Unit Supervisor to strategize effective schedule	**Timeframe**	2 mos (11/30/04)	**Assigned to**	Supervisors
	1.2.2 Unit Supervisors meet with Program Manager to develop reasonable and effective schedule		3 mos (12/31/04)		Supervisors and Program Manager
	1.2.3 Staff trained on new policy and procedure for inputting information into CWS/CMS		4 mos (1/31/05)		Analyst, Staff Development and System Support Technician
Strategy 1. 3 Monitor progress in improving this area in a positive and supportive manner.			**Strategy Rationale** [1] Monitoring the progress of this issue will assist in the incremental improvement expected in this measure. This also demonstrates to staff the importance and expectation of improvement in this area.	
Milestone	**1.3.1** Reports generated to review progress with Supervisors	**Timeframe**	5 mos (2/28/05)	**Assigned to**	Analyst and System Support Technician
	1.3.2 Supervisors review reports with staff		6 mos (3/31/05)		Supervisors
	1.3.3 Meet with Supervisors/Analyst to track and troubleshoot		7 mos (4/30/05)		Program Manager, Supervisors, and Analyst
Notes: The goal for improvement is to increase the indicator numeric value by 5 percent each quarter until the threshold of 90 percent is consistently met.				

Improvement Goal 2.0
 Improve Quality Assurance of Timely Social Worker Visits

Strategy 2.1 Follow up with training, support and monitoring of new process			**Strategy Rationale [1]** Offering training and supervisory support of this important issue will demonstrate the importance to staff.		
Milestone	**2.1.1** Training designed and given	**Timeframe**	3 mos (12/31/04)	**Assigned to**	Analyst, Staff Development and System Support Technician
	2.1.2 Supervisors discuss input issues at unit meetings on an on-going basis and troubleshoot areas of concern with staff		4 mos (1/31/05)		Supervisors
	2.1.3 Reports generated and reviewed between supervisors-director and supervisors-staff		7 mos (4/30/05)		Program Manager, Supervisors, Analyst, and System Support Technician
Strategy 2. 2 Work with supervisors who excel in holding staff accountable for timely data input			**Strategy Rationale [1]** Some supervisors do a better job than others of supporting staff in timely data input and assuring timely input on an on-going basis		
Milestone	**2.2.1** Identify supervisors who excel in holding staff accountable and encourage sharing of techniques at supervisors meeting	**Timeframe**	2 mos (11/30/04)	**Assigned to**	Program Manager, Supervisors, and Analyst
	2.2.2 All supervisors are trained on expectations of accountability		5 mos (2/28/05)		Program Manager and Analyst
	2.2.3 Supervisors and Program Manager review reports on a monthly basis		Starting by 6 mos through next 12 mos (3/31-9/30/05		Program Manager and Analyst
Strategy 2.3 Institutionalize expectation of timeliness and accuracy of CWS/CMS data input			**Strategy Rationale [1]** During the CSA it was learned that there is a substantial amount of backlog in data entry for CWS/ CMS as staff does not see this as a priority.		
Mile stone	**2.3.1** Expectations for both staff and supervisors are written and reviewed with staff and supervisors	**Time fram**	2 mos (11/30/04)	**Assi gned**	Program Manager and Analyst

2.3.2 Supervisors discuss and support staff in unit meetings and during work time on an on-going basis	3 mos (12/31/04)		Supervisors
2.3.3 A means of recognizing and celebrating improvement in timely data input is identified and implemented	4 mos (1/31/04)		Supervisors

Describe systemic changes needed to further support the improvement goal.
Quality and Assurance system will continue to develop and improve on internal case reviews to assure we remain focused on improving this outcome.

Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals.
During the CSA process it was expressed by staff that training was needed for data entry where it relates to outcomes measured by state/feds, i.e., closures, contacts, visits, and placements.

Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals.
This is an internal agency matter and thus, no involvement of other partners is required.

Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals.
None identified at this time.

[1] **Describe how the strategies will build on progress and improve this outcome or systemic factor**

Outcome Factor: 2C Timely Social Worker Visits with Child

Systemic Factor: D Quality Assurance

County's Current Performance:

The county's current performance for Q4 2003 in Dec 67.9%, Nov 68.3%, and Oct 65.4%. Q3 2003 was Sep 61.3%, Aug 60.1%, and Jul 58.4%. Q2 was Jun 68.9%, 66.7%, and 67.7%.   The county falls below the expected rate of 90%. Input from the CSA team suggests that indicators (timely social worker visits w/child) may be influenced by data input issues (timely and accurate entry).   During the CSA it was learned that there is a substantial amount of backlog in data entry for CWS/CMS. It was noted in the CSA that data entry has not been a priority due to high and complex caseloads. The CWS staff indicated during the CSA process that the required visits are being done, but only the essential information for CWS/CMS is being documented.

Improvement Goal 1.0

Improve timeliness of data input among staff

Strategy 1. 1 Identify staff and redeploy to assist with data input				**Strategy Rationale[2]** Having staff designated to this issue will bring county up to baseline, and demonstrate the department's commitment to addressing this issue.	
Milestone	**1.1.1** Identify units/staff with delinquent input issues via CWS/CMS	**Timeframe**	1 mo (10/31/04)	**Assigned to**	Program Manager and Supervisors
	1.1.2 Staff redeployed to bring targeted units/staff current in CWS/CMS data entry		3 mos (12/31/04)		Program Manager
	1.1.3 Train redeployed staff to task specific duties to bring targeted units/staff current in CWS/CMS data entry		3-4 mos (12/31-1/31/05)		Analyst, Staff Development and System Support Technician
Strategy 1. 2 Set Timely Data Input Schedule				**Strategy Rationale [1]** Supervisory staff will confer, set up, and agree upon a reasonable set schedule that will improve compliance for this outcome.	
Milestone	**1.2.1**. Line staff meet with Supervisors to strategize effective schedule	**Timeframe**	1 mo (10/31/04)	**Assigned to**	Supervisors
	1.2.2 Supervisors meet with Program Manager to develop reasonable effective schedule		2 mos (11/30/04)		Supervisors and Program Manager

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[2] **Describe how the strategies will build on progress and improve this outcome or systemic factor**

	1.2.3 Staff trained on new policy and procedure for inputting information into CWS/CMS		3 mos (12/31/04)		Analyst, Staff Development and System Support Technician

Strategy 1. 3 Work with supervisors on their role of holding staff accountable for timely data input		**Strategy Rationale** [1] Some supervisors do a better job than others of supporting staff in timely data input and assuring timely input on an ongoing basis	

Milestone		Timeframe		Assigned to
	1.3.1 Identify supervisors who excel at holding staff accountable and encourage sharing of techniques at all supervisors meetings.	1 mo (10/31/04)		Program Manager, Supervisors, Analyst
	1.3.2 All supervisors are trained on new process.	2 mos (11/30/04)		Analyst, Staff Develement and System Support Technician
	1.3.3 Supervisors and Program Manger review reports on a monthly basis.	3 mos (12/31/04)		Supervisors and Program Manager

Notes:
Develop an internal Peer Quality Case Review system to involve staff in this process and for Quality Assurance purposes. The goal for improvement is to increase the indicator numeric value by 5 percent each quarter until the threshold of 90 percent is consistently met.

Improvement Goal 2.0
 Improve Quality Assurance of Timely Social Worker Visits

Strategy 2.1 Follow up with training, support and monitoring of new process		**Strategy Rationale** [1] Offering training and supervisory support of this important issue will demonstrate the importance to staff.	

Milestone		Timeframe		Assigned to
	2.1.1 Training designed and given	3 mos (12/31/04)		Analyst, Staff Development and System Support Technician
	2.1.2 Supervisors discuss input issues at unit meetings in an on-going basis and troubleshoot areas of concern with staff	4 mos (1/31/05)		Supervisors
	2.1.3 Reports generated and reviewed between supervisors-director and supervisors-staff	7 mos (4/30/05)		Program Manager, Supervisors, Analyst, and System Support Technician

Strategy 2. 2 Work with supervisors who excel in holding staff accountable for timely data input		**Strategy Rationale** [1] Some supervisors do a better job than others of supporting staff in timely data input and assuring timely input on an on-going basis	

		Timeframe		Assigned to	
Milestone	**2.2.1** Identify supervisors who excel in holding staff accountable and encourage sharing of techniques at supervisors meeting		2 mos (11/30/04)		Program Manager, Supervisors, and Analyst
	2.2.2 All supervisors are trained on expectations of accountability		5 mos (2/28/05)		Program Manager, Analyst and Staff Development
	2.2.3 Supervisors and Program Manager review reports on a monthly basis		Starting by 6 mos through next 12 mos (3/31-9/30/05		Program Manager and Analyst

Strategy 2.3 Institutionalize expectation of timeliness and accuracy of CWS/CMS data input	**Strategy Rationale** [1] During the CSA it was learned that there is a substantial amount of backlog in data entry for CWS/ CMS as staff does not see this as a priority.

		Timeframe		Assigned to	
Milestone	**2.3.1** Expectations for both staff and supervisors are written and reviewed with staff and supervisors		2 mos (11/30/04)		Program Manager and Analyst
	2.3.2 Supervisors discuss and support staff in unit meetings and during work time on an on-going basis		3 mos (12/31/04)		Supervisors
	2.3.3 A means of recognizing and celebrating improvement in timely data input is identified and implemented		4 mos (1/31/04)		Analyst in consultation with Supervisors

Describe systemic changes needed to further support the improvement goal. Quality and Assurance system will continue to develop and improve on internal case reviews to assure we remain focused on improving this outcome.
Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals. During the CSA process it was expressed by staff that training was needed for data entry where it relates to outcomes measured by state/feds, i.e., closures, contacts, visits, and placements.
Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals. This is an internal agency matter and thus, no involvement of other partners is required.
Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals. None identified at this time.

[1] **Describe how the strategies will build on progress and improve this outcome or systemic factor**

Outcome Factor: 4B – Foster Care Placement in Least Restrictive Settings					
Systemic Factor: C – General Licensing, Recruitment and Retention					
County's Current Performance: Our current performance is 86.6% at Initial Placement for Group/Shelter during the period of 10/01/92-09/30/03. During the period of 7/1/02-06/30/03, the Initial Placement is 87.1%. This is an average of 86.9% for these periods. The average for the state during the periods of 10/01/02-9/30/03 (20.1%) and 07/01/02-6/30/03 (20.6%) is 20.3% for Group/Shelter Initial Placements. In completing the Self-Assessment we learned that the initial placements in the emergency shelter count as a placement in this category even during the process to place them with relatives or in a foster home. Also, lack of appropriate placement options for the County has influenced performance on this indicator (Emergency Foster Homes or the Shelter for children with Failed Placements).					
Improvement Goal 1.0 Reduce the Initial Placement in Shelter and Group Homes.					
Strategy 1. 1 Increase placements in Relative and Foster Homes		**Strategy Rationale**[3] Expedite Relative Approval Process so children can be placed with relatives within 23 hours of removal from their home.			
Milestone	**1.1.1** Explore what other counties are doing and draft policy.	**Timeframe**	1 mo (10/30/04)	**Assigned to**	Analyst
	1.1.2 Policy, reviewed at meeting with supervisors. Revisions made and reviewed for approval by Program Manager.		3 mos (12/31/04)		Analyst and Program Manager
	1.1.3 Policy presented and staff trained on new process.		4 mos (1/31/05)		Analyst and Supervisors
Strategy 1. 2 Identify staff who would be responsible for completing Emergency 23 hour Relative Placement		**Strategy Rationale** Having the Relative Placements approved within 23 hour period will reduce the % of children placed in our shelter			
Milestone	**1.2.1**. Explore the possibility of having designated staff run Relative Clearances on CLETS	**Timeframe**	2 mos (11/30/04)	**Assigned to**	Analyst
	1.2.2 Develop an MOU between DSS and Probation to access CLETS		3 mos (12/31/04)		Program Managers and Directors (DSS/Probation)
	1.2.3 MOU presented and discussed at unit meetings with staff		4 mos (1/31/05)		Supervisors

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[3] Describe how the strategy will build on progress and improve this program/outcome area.

Strategy 1. 3 Measure our progress in reducing initial placements and assess the 23 hour Placement Process			Strategy Rationale It is necessary to measure our progress in applying this process to establish a baseline so we know if we have improved our performance in this area. Measures also reward staff for progress and demonstrates that the SIP is being applied and working.
Milestone	**1.3.1** Develop tracking process for 23 hour placement process	**Timeframe** 3 mos (12/31/04)	**Assigned to** Analyst
	1.3.2 Develop training for staff on tracking process for 23 hour Placement Process	4 mos (1/31/05)	Program Managers, Directors and Analyst
	1.3.3 Provide training to staff on policy and procedures for providing identified information for tracking purposes	5 mos (2/28/05)	Staff Development (in-house training)

Improvement Goal 2.0
Increase number of qualified foster families

Strategy 2.1 Identify staff responsible for recruitment and campaign efforts for foster family homes.			Strategy Rationale Having a staff person dedicated to this assignment is necessary for the success of this effort and to show the commitment by our agency to this area.
Milestone	**2.1.1** Explore what other counties are doing to recruit foster homes and emergency placement homes	**Timeframe** 2 mos (11/30/04)	**Assigned to** Licensing Analyst and Staff Service Analyst
	2.1.2 Seek and attend training on Recruitment and Retention	4 mos (1/31/05)	Social Worker IV

Strategy 2. 2 Conduct needs-assessment of Foster Homes needed in this county			Strategy Rationale Assessing our agency's needs will help determine our priorities and guidelines for recruiting Foster Homes.
Milestone	**2.2.1** Develop, conduct and report on Needs Assessment	**Timeframe** 3 mos (12/31/04)	**Assigned to** Licensing Analyst and Staff Service Analyst
	2.2.2 Review Report and Prioritize our needs with the Program Manager	4 mos (1/31/05)	Licensing Analyst and Staff Service Analyst

Strategy 2.3 Define our goals of recruitment and retention based on the Needs-Assessment.	Strategy Rationale Defining our goals will help us to stay focused on a specific population to improve this outcome.

Milestone		Timeframe	Assigned to	
	2.3.1 Explore what resources are necessary to achieve these goals	4 mos 1/31/05		Licensing Analyst, Staff Service Analyst, and Social Worker IV
	2.3.2 Develop a recruitment and retention plan	5 mos (2/28/05)		Licensing Analyst, Staff Service Analyst, and Social Worker IV
	2.3.3 Implement the Recruitment and Retention Plan	6 mos (3/31/05)		Licensing Analyst, Staff Service Analyst, and Social Worker IV

Describe any additional systemic factors needing to be addressed that support the improvement plan goals.
General Licensing, Recruitment and Retention as stated above.

Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals.
As stated above, Retention and Recruitment for staff person assigned to this responsibility. Also, we would like to learn from other counties who have addressed this issue or are already performing to expectation on this issue in order to learn from them.

Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals.
We will need to collaborate with the Probation Department to expedite access and training on the CLETS system. We will also have to work with the Licensing Unit on streamlining the Relative Approval Process for emergency placements.

Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals.
Changes in the laws that interpret regulations in favor of relatives. A strict criterion for Relative Placement makes it difficult to place children with their families. We can improve performance for this measure but may not be able to influence the number of approvable relative placements due to economic issues or because of prior criminal history that prevents them from meeting the criteria for placement into their homes.

Outcome Factor: 8A Children Transitioning to Adulthood (Probation and Department of Social Services (DSS))

County's Current Performance: Our current performance for 10/01/02-09/30/03 is the following: 118 Received ILP services, 17 High School Diploma, 13 Enrolled in College/Higher Education, 9 Completed Vocational Training, 22 Employed or other means of support. In completing the CSA we learned that continued improvement in this area will require working closely with service providers and partners. This may require the development of joint policies and procedures or standards that not only address CWS youth but also Probation youth serviced by the Independent Living Program (ILP).

Improvement Goal 1.0
Improve referral process for Independent Living Program services

Strategy 1. 1 Standardize ILP referral process			**Strategy Rationale[4]** Standardizing the referral process will increase number of participants in ILP
Milestone	**1.1.1** DSS/Probation meet to review and update ILP guidelines	**Timeframe**	3 mos (12/31/04)	**Assigned to**	DSS ILP Coordinator Probation Division Manager
	1.1.2 Probation/DSS develop desk guide/protocol for ILP referral process		4 mos (1/31/05)		DSS - ILP Coordinator Probation Division Manager
	1.1.3 Desk guide/protocol approved by Directors		5 mos (2/28/04)		DSS Program Manager Chief Probation Officer

Strategy 1. 2 Train staff on updated ILP desk guide/protocol			**Strategy Rationale [1]** Training staff on the new desk guide/protocol will improve timeliness of ILP services and increase compliance
Milestone	**1.2.1.** Develop training and jointly train staff on desk guide	**Timeframe**	6 mos (3/31/05)	**Assigned to**	DSS ILP Coordinator, DSS Staff Development, DSS Analyst and assigned Probation Officer
	1.2.2 Monitor implementation of referral process (Deskguide)		6 mos (3/31/05)		DSS Social Worker Supervisors, Probation Officer III's, and Probation Division Manager

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[4] **Describe how the strategies will build on progress and improve this outcome or systemic factor**

1.2.3 DSS/Probation meet quarterly to discuss issues and troubleshoot for improvements. Provide on-going training based on quarterly updates	11-12 mos 7/1/05-8/1/05		DSS ILP Coordinator and Probation Division Manager/DPO III

Improvement Goal 2.0
Improve Quality and Delivery of Independent Living Program (ILP) services to children

Strategy 2.1 Promoting (full range of) ILP services			**Strategy Rationale** [1] By promoting ILP services we will increase awareness of the program and our commitment to delivery of services to our children eligible for these services.	
Milestone	**2.1.1** Identify target groups/individuals	**Timeframe**	3 mos (12/31/04)	**Assigned to**	DSS ILP Coordinator and Probation Division Manager
	2.1.2 Develop materials to increase awareness		4 mos (1/31/05)		DSS Analyst
	2.1.3 Target groups trained on services available to ILP eligible children		7 mos (4/30/05)		Staff Development DSS

Strategy 2. 2 Improve quality of ILP services			**Strategy Rationale** [1] By improving the quality of ILP services we will increase the attendance, participation, and success rate for these children.	
Milestone	**2.2.1** Form committee (IVC, DSS, Probation, IVROP, Foster parents, Youth, Behavioral Health) to assess ILP services	**Timeframe**	3 mos (12/31/04)	**Assigned to**	DSS ILP Coordinator/Probation Division Manager
	2.2.2 Perform assessment of current services (assessing pre/post IVC Assessment data, satisfaction survey, life skills assessment)		4 mos (1/31/05)		DSS Analyst and System Support Technician
	2.2.3 Report results to Foster Care Advisory Committee and both DSS Program Manager and Probation Division Manager then forward recommendations to Directors.		7 mos (4/30/05)		DSS ILP Coordinator and Probation Division Manager

Describe systemic changes needed to further support the improvement goal.
This portion of the SIP is about systemic change of the ILP referral process. Although, during the County Self Assessment it was learned that improved SAWS reporting that would identify only targeted (eligible for ILP) youth is necessary to further support this improvement goal.
Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals.
Local education needs are noted in milestones.
Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals.
Participation from the following partners is needed to achieve the above improvement goals: Probation, Imperial Valley College, Imperial Valley Regional Occupational Program, Behavioral Health, Foster Parents and Youth.   A committee will need to be formed with these partners to assess current services and make recommendations for improvement.
Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals.
State required standardized ILP services of youth placed out-of county and provide funds for other counties to serve our children who have been placed there.   Services are needed for 14 and 15 year olds therefore funding should be available for this age group. Improved after care for ILP participants with mandated services and funding.

[1] **Describe how the strategies will build on progress and improve this outcome or systemic factor**

Systemic Factor: A – Relevant Management Information Systems					
County's Current Performance: Input from the County Self-Assessment process indicates that county performance on many indicators (timely response, timely social worker visits, foster care placements) may be influenced by data input issues (timeliness, data entry errors). During the County Self Assessment (CSA) it was learned that there is a substantial amount of backlog in data entry for CWS/CMS. It was noted in the CSA that data entry has not been a priority due to high and complex caseloads. The CWS staff indicated during the CSA process that the required responses/visits are being done, but only the essential information for CWS/CMS is being documented. It was also learned that there is no standard tool for gathering information during family assessments.					
Improvement Goal 1.0 Improve Accuracy of Data Collected and Input into CWS/CMS					
Strategy 1. 1 Develop desk guide in easy-to-use format for staff to gather and input information into CWS/CMS			**Strategy Rationale[5]** Staff explained that there is no uniform policy or procedure for gathering or inputting this information. Standardizing this process will assist in improving this outcome.		
Milestone	**1.1.1** All County Letter (ACL) and California Department of Social Services (CDSS) reviewed and desk guide created	**Timeframe**	3 mos (12/31/04)	**Assigned to**	Analyst
	1.1.2 Supervisors receive desk guide and input issues discussed/reviewed with Program Manager		4 mos (1/31/05)		Program Manager
	1.1.3 Desk guide distributed to and reviewed with staff		4 mos (1/31/05)		Supervisors
Strategy 1. 2 Implement uniform investigation/assessment tool for all staff			**Strategy Rationale [1]** Using a standardized tool for information gathering will insure mandated information is gathered during contacts by all staff		
Milestone	**1.2.1**. Develop desk guide in easy-to-use format with standardized tool for staff to gather and input information into CWS/CMS	**Timeframe**	3 mos (12/31/04)	**Assigned to**	Analyst
	1.2.2 Train staff on policy and procedure for using tool and inputting info into CWS/CMS		4 mos (1/31/05)		Analyst, Staff Development and System Support Technician

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[5] **Describe how the strategies will build on progress and improve this outcome or systemic factor**

	1.2.3 Supervisor and Analyst monitor appropriate use of tool by staff		5 mos (2/28/05)	Analyst and Supervisors

Improvement Goal 2.0 Improve timeliness of data input among staff

	Strategy 2.1 Identify staff responsible for inputting information into CWS/CMS			**Strategy Rationale** [1] Having designated staff to ensure that data is entered on a timely basis will improve this outcome measure	
Milestone	**2.1.1** Identify units/staff with delinquent input issues via CWS/CMS	**Timeframe**	1 mo (10/31/04	**Assigned to**	Program Manager/Supervisors
	2.1.2 Staff redeployed from current duties to bring targeted units/staff up to date		3 mos (12/31/04		Program Manager
	2.1.3 Train redeployed staff to task specific duties to bring targeted units/staff current in CWS/CMS data entry		3 –4 mos (12/31/04-1/31/05)		Analyst, Staff Development and System Support Technician
	Strategy 2. 2 Work with supervisors on their role in holding staff accountable for timely data input			**Strategy Rationale** [1] Some supervisors do a better job than others of supporting staff in timely data input and assuring timely input on an on-going basis	
Milestone	**2.2.1** Identify supervisors who excel in holding staff accountable and encourage sharing of techniques at supervisors meeting	**Timeframe**	2 moS (11/30/04)	**Assigned to**	Program Manager, Supervisors, and Analysts
	2.2.2 All supervisors are trained on techniques and expectations of accountability		5 mos (2/28/05)		Program Manager Analyst, Staff Development
	2.2.3 Supervisors and Program Manager review reports on monthly basis		6-12 mos (3/31-9/30/05)		Program Manager and Analyst

Strategy 2.3 Institutionalize expectation of timeliness and accuracy of CWS/CMS data input			**Strategy Rationale [1]** Having a written policy and/or procedure of expectations about timeliness and accuracy for staff will improve compliance and this outcome.	
Milestone	**2.3.1** Expectations for workers and supervisors are written (including CWS/CMS responsibilities) and reviewed with staff	**Timeframe** 5 mos (2/28/05)	**Assigned to**	Analyst
	2.3.2 Supervisors discuss and support staff in unit meetings and during work time on an on-going basis	6-12 mos (3/31-9/30/05)		Program Manager to monitor implementation with supervisors
	2.3.3 Developing a means of recognizing and celebrating improvement around this issue is identified and implemented	6 mos (3/31/05)		Analyst in consultation with Supervisors

Describe systemic changes needed to further support the improvement goal. This portion of the SIP is about systemic change regarding the systemic factor, management information system
Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals. During the CSA process it was expressed by staff that training was needed for data entry where it relates to outcome measures by state/feds, i.e., closures, contacts, visits, placements. We would also like to learn from other counties who have addressed this issue or are already performing to expectation in this area in order to learn from them.
Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals. This is an internal agency matter and thus, no involvement of other partners is required
Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals. None at this time.

[1] **Describe how the strategies will build on progress and improve this outcome or systemic factor**

Systemic Factor: A Relevant Management Information Systems (Probation)					
County's Current Performance: Input from the Self-Assessment Team indicates that county performance may be influenced by data input and system issues.					
Improvement Goal 1.0 Upgrade and improve system server for new software					
Strategy 1. 1 Identify and assign staff to update and maintain system server			**Strategy Rationale[6]** Staff assigned to service and maintain probation database to demonstrate agency's commitment to addressing these issues		
Milestone	**1.1.1** Purchase and install new servers	**Timeframe**	1 mo (10/31/04)	**Assigned to**	Probation Officer, Information Systems Department, Contract Provider
	1.1.2 Assigned Staff given Administrator rights to the system		1 mo (10/31/04)		Probation Officer, Division Manager
	1.1.3 Upgrade user-end PC and install system software (NaviLine)		2 mos (11/15/04)		Probation Officer
Strategy 1. 2 Improve Jalan System with user-friendly NaviLine software			**Strategy Rationale [1]** Installing Word will facilitate the creation and editing of documents making it easier and more efficient for staff to input and maintain data		
Milestone	**1.2.1** Deploy system and bring on-line for testing purposes	**Timeframe**	1 mo (10/31/04)	**Assigned to**	Information Systems Department and Contract Provider
	1.2.2 Train Probation Staff in the use of Word and NaviLine		1 mo (10/31/04		Information Systems Department
	1.2.3 Develop Desk Guide for quick reference		4 mos (1/31/05)		Probation Officer and Office Clerk

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[6] **Describe how the strategies will build on progress and improve this outcome or systemic factor**

Improvement Goal 2.0
Implement NaviLine System to improve timeliness of data input by staff

Strategy 2.1 Facilitate how our staff enters and maintains data				**Strategy Rationale** [1] NaviLine is a user friendly system and will be easier for staff to enter their information on a timely manner, decreasing errors in data entry
Milestone	**2.1.1** Incorporate Word into old system (Jalan)	**Timeframe**	1 wk (10/01/04)	**Assigned to**	Information Systems Department
	2.1.2 Implement testing phase of Naviline and create/convert forms/documents		2 wks (10/15/04)		Probation Officer/PO Assistant
	2.1.3 Train staff on basics of Naviline		1 mo (10/31/04)		Contract Provider

Strategy 2. 2 Follow up with training, support, and monitoring. Be supportive and not punitive				**Strategy Rationale** [1] Offering training and supervisory support on this issue will demonstrate its importance to staff
Milestone	**2.2.1** Training designed and offered to staff	**Timeframe**	3 mos (12/31/2004)	**Assigned to**	Information Systems Department/Probation Officer/Division Manager
	2.2.2 Supervisors discuss issues at unit meetings on an on-going basis and troubleshoot areas of concern with staff		5 mos (2/28/04)		Division Manager, Probation Officer and Deputy Chief of Probation
	2.2.3 Reports generated and reviewed between supervisors-chief and supervisors-staff		7 mos (4/30/04)		Probation Officer and Probation Assistant

Strategy 2.3 Instill Department wide expectation of timeliness and accuracy of NaviLine data input				**Strategy Rationale** [1] Staff provided feedback that they are overwhelmed with work and do not have time to do clerical level work, therefore data entry responsibilities suffer. This must be addressed in a proactive and supportive way
Milestone	**2.3.1** Expectations for workers and supervisors are written (including NaviLine/Word responsibilities) and reviewed with all staff	**Timeframe**	3 mos (12/31/04)	**Assigned to**	Probation Officer and Division Manager
	2.3.2 Division Managers discuss and support staff in unit meetings and during work time on an on-going basis		4 mos (1/31/04)		Division Managers
	2.3.3 A means of recognizing and celebrating improvement around this issue is identified and implemented		5 mos (2/28/04)		Probation Officer and Division Manager

Describe systemic changes needed to further support the improvement goal.
None Identified.
Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals.
We would like to learn from other counties who have addressed this issue (or in the process of) to learn from them.
Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals.
None Identified.
Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals.
None Identified.

[1] **Describe how the strategies will build on progress and improve this outcome or systemic factor**

Systemic Factor: B. Case Review (B3 Parent-Child-Youth Involvement in Case Planning / B4 General Case Planning and Review)
County's Current Performance: During the process of the CSA we learned of many concerns by staff regarding case plans for families.   Case plans lack a strength-based approach, and parents and their support systems are not sufficiently involved in case planning. Case plans are sometimes overwhelming to the parents and not tailored to the specific needs of the family.   Also, there is no standard among staff for involving family in the case plan process.
Improvement Goal 1.0 Increase use of strength based, family case planning and involvement of parents, youth, and family's support system in case plan.

Strategy 1. 1 Develop and communicate policy regarding use of family-focused social work and the need for increased participation by families during case planning process.	**Strategy Rationale[7]** Staff is inconsistent about use of strength based, family-focused case planning and family participation in case planning. DSS needs to send clear message about this expectation to their staff.

Milestone		Timeframe	Assigned to
	1.1.1 Explore what other counties are doing and draft policy	2 mos (11/30/04)	DSS Analyst
	1.1.2 Policy reviewed at meeting with supervisors, revised, and reviewed and accepted by management team	3 mos (12/31/04)	Analyst and Program Manager
	1.1.3 Policy presented and discussed at unit meetings for all case carrying social workers	4 mos (1/31/05)	Supervisors and Analyst

Strategy 1. 2 Develop and implement process which ensures family engagement	**Strategy Rationale [1]** Developing and implementing the process of family engagement will send a clear message about this expectation.

Milestone		Timeframe	Assigned to
	1.2.1. Find out what other counties are doing to engage families	2 mos (11/30/04)	Analyst
	1.2.2 Develop an engagement tool	3 mos (12/31/04)	Analyst

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[7] **Describe how the strategies will build on progress and improve this outcome or systemic factor**

	1.2.3 Train staff on use of process and engagement tool.	4 mos (1/31/05)		Staff Development

Strategy 1. 3 Measure how we are doing in applying family focused training and parent participation in case planning		**Strategy Rationale** [1] We need to establish a baseline of staff who is already successfully involving families in case planning so we can measure our progress and inform staff that our SIP is working.	

Milestone	**1.3.1** Written survey on family-focused practices is written and approved by Program Manager	**Timeframe**	3 mos (12/31/04)	**Assigned to**	Analyst
	1.3.2 Survey administered to staff and clients and presented to management and supervisors		4 mos (1/31/05)		Analyst
	1.3.3 Survey re-administered within one year		11 mos (by 8/30/05)		Analyst

Describe systemic changes needed to further support the improvement goal.
Provide orientation for parents entering child welfare system using DSS/Community resources whenever possible (ie Parent Leadership Group). Meetings at parent/family team convenience, location and outside of 8-5 timeframes. Resources inadequate to meet mandated and time-limited family training needs (i.e. parenting, anger management, etc.). The Quality and Assurance system will continue to develop and improve on internal case reviews to assure we remain focused on improving outcomes in this area.

Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals.
Training for staff on Family Engagement from Training Academy.

Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals.
Develop and strengthen role of Parent Leadership Group for Supportive Services and Training to parents. Imperial County Behavioral Health Services will be providing outreach, assessment, and intervention for parents of court dependent youth.

Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals.
The 52- week requirement for Anger Management interferes with Family Reunification timeframes, especially when there is a waiting list for these services. Also, timeframes are inadequate to provide services in rural communities with very limited resources.